1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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One piece of cloth of this expensive kind is sold for 4*s.* 6*d.*; as the cost of the material is 3*s.* 4*d.*, the profit made in five days' work is 1*s.* 2*d.*, or just under 3*d.* a day. If cheaper, plain material is used the profit is slightly smaller; the cost of the material for one piece of cloth is 1*s.* 6*d.*, and the cloth is sold for 2*s.* 6*d.*, six pieces being again produced each month, which gives a profit of 1*s.* per cloth, or 2*d.* a day. But instead of cutting up and sewing together the cloth in form of the *ede*, the weaver can also sell the full-length cloth as such to the cap-makers, or, better still, can make it into caps himself. A weaver can produce one cap (made of one *kpere* of cloth) each day, that is, twenty caps a month, allowing for two intervals of five days each for the weaving of the cloth. The white cloth caps, called *fula*, are very popular in Bida and are sold at prices from 9*d.* to 1*s.*; the cost of the material being 6*s.* 8*d.* the profit on twenty caps is thus between 7*s.* and 12*s.*, or from 3*d.* to 5*d.* a day. It is interesting to note that this last kind of work, although more profitable and also in much greater demand, is nevertheless regarded as a slightly degrading occupation. *Fula* making, my informants pointed out, is tailor's work, and not the proper work for trained weavers; they undertake it, as they frankly admit, only in order to obtain money for tax or bride-price. In this respect, then, the dissolution of the *efakó*-unit offers another benefit to the young members of the group who are out for quick money: for, relieved of their duties towards the head of the group, they are also relieved of their duties towards the ethical standards of the profession, to which the older men still cling.

In the villages only cheaper qualities of cloth, mostly native-dyed cloth, are produced; striped cloth which is sold for 1*s.* 3*d.*, the material costing 9*d.* and the dye 3*d.*, and plain indigo-dyed cloth (a kind of cloth that would find no buyers in Bida), sold for 1*s.* 9*d.*, and produced at a cost of 1*s.* 3*d.* But even when the village weavers produce the same kind of cloth as the Bida craftsmen, they sell it cheaper, being content with a smaller profit. Thus striped cloth of the kind sold in Bida for 2*s.* 6*d.* is produced by the village artisan for 2*s.*, allowing a profit of 9*d.* instead of 1*s.* 2*d.* On the other hand, the work and material of the village weavers are known to be inferior to that of the Bida craftsmen. The village weavers frankly admit it. They use the cruder indigenous dye instead of European dyes, they gin their own cotton and work with this inferior cotton-thread which breaks frequently during the weaving. They take ten days for the weaving of a piece of cloth which the Bida craftsmen finish in five. But just because they limit themselves to this cheaper and cruder material and cater exclusively for the less wealthy customers, they can stand the competition of European cloth better than the Bida weavers, who have specialized in more ambitious and expensive work. Here are the comparative prices: a striped cloth of European (or Japanese) manufacture is sold in Bida for 5*s.*, as against 4*s.* 6*d.* for Bida-woven cloth and 1*s.* 3*d.* for cloth produced in the village.

Formerly, when the *efakó* system in weaving was still capable of supporting a whole family, the younger members of the *efakó* group practised a little farm-work as *bucá*. The family head did not join in this additional work and often, if he was an old man, he did not even take part in actual weaving. His income was supplemented by training

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tion, for their pocket-money. For example, a father would give his boy 2*d.* to buy cotton-thread which the boy would then plait into trouser strings and sell for 3*d.*; or boys work thin strips of leather into the lacquered amulet strings which the Nupe wear round the neck, making again a profit of 1*d.*

A few examples may illustrate the economic scope of these handicrafts. Straw hats are made of narrow strips of plaited grass, sewn together in spirals. The making of a good straw hat takes from three to four days if the hat-maker buys the plaited strips of straw ready-made, and five days if he plaits them himself. A plain hat is sold for 4*d.* to 6*d.*, the material costing between 1*d.* and 2*d.* A more expensive type of hat, in which part of the crown is covered with leather-work, is the product of two craftsmen, straw-hat maker and leather-worker. A hat of this kind sells for 1*s.* The Bida tailors produce a variety of goods: caps both plain (machine-made) and embroidered; gowns, trousers, saddle-cloths. A plain white cap is sold for 4*d.*, the cost of the material being 2*d.*; a tailor can produce four such caps a day. The embroidered caps are sold for 1*s.*, the material costing 6*d.*; one cap is made in three days. Plain white gowns, also machine-made, are sold for 7*s.* 6*d.*, the cost of the material being 5*s.*; it takes one or two days to make. A simple saddle-cloth takes from three to five days to make; the cost of the material is 6*d.*, and it is sold for 1*s.* or 1*s.* 6*d.* A more elaborate cloth, embroidered and dyed in various colours, takes twenty days to make; the cost of the material is 3*s.*, and it is sold for 10*s.* An embroidered gown is made in fifteen to twenty days. Embroidered Bida gowns are famous all over Nigeria; they are sold for £3 to £5 in Bida, and for much more in the north. The cost of the gown itself (which is made by the ordinary tailor) and of the material used in the embroidery comes to between 15*s.* and 30*s.*; the profit of the craftsman is thus between £2 and £3. But then, he may not be able to sell a gown of this kind, or receive an order for an embroidered gown, oftener than once a year.

We have already mentioned that certain villages, e.g. Kutigi, are famous for their mat industry. Every man and boy in Kutigi works mats in his spare time—and spare time here means just as much the leisure season of the year as every hour that can be spared from farm-work. When sitting in front of their houses in the evenings, even when walking home from the farms, the people are working: they carry a supply of dried grass dyed in different colours, in a kind of quiver under the arm and, while they walk or talk, their fingers are busy plaiting the grass into long, narrow strips. The strips are 3 or 4 inches wide, and up to 15 yards long. The Nupe make oval mats, in which the long strips are sewn together in a multicoloured spiral pattern; or square mats, in which the strips, cut to the same length, are sewn together edge to edge, again in a multicoloured design. The Nupe also make square mats of split sorghum and maize stalks, often dyed in red, yellow, and black, which are harder of texture and have a glossy surface. The oval mats take from five to seven days to make; the cost of the material—grass brought from the river swamps (see p. 200)—and the dye is 5*d.*; the mat is sold in Kutigi for 9*d.* or 10*d.*, and in Bida, after it has passed through

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men are always ready to try their hand at something new, and changes of profession are frequent. The record is held, perhaps, by a Bida man who started as a mat-maker (the occupation of his older brother), changed over to cushion-making, then to tailoring, and eventually to leather-work, which he found more lucrative and which he is practising at present. *Efakó* co-operation on the narrowest basis, between father and unmarried sons, occurs occasionally. Thus in a family of embroiderers a father and two sons worked together; working on the same gown, the father would execute the more elaborate designs, while his two sons carried out the simpler embroidery; the sons were maintained by the father, and all earnings went to him. With simpler kind of work, this co-operation is reduced further, and we find, for example, this arrangement between a father and his unmarried son, both straw-hat makers: the father took half of his son's earnings, and in return maintained him, and would in due course pay part of his bride-price (he would be unable to bear the full expense). But in the majority of cases this rudimentary co-operation, too, disappears, and even unmarried sons work entirely on their own.

One might wonder whether these 'individualistic' crafts have not, at some previous stage, shown a larger measure of co-operative organization. Remembering the weakening of guild-organized crafts under the pressure of modern conditions, we might, in fact, ask whether the individual crafts as we find them to-day do not represent merely a final stage of that incipient disintegration. This is indeed the case in one of the industries practised to-day as individual crafts—leather-work. Leather-work involves specialized technique and skill in much higher measure than do the other individual handicrafts. But it also used to involve comparatively large-scale co-operation of a group of workers, in the sense of an efficient division of labour, which was meant to ensure the execution of large and frequently urgent orders. A guild-head, called *Magaji*, organized and controlled group production; he also acted as the official intermediary between the craftsmen and the king, who was, again, their most important customer: for the Bida leather-workers supplied a large proportion of the military equipment of the Nupe army, such as saddlery and leather shields, sword-sheaths, and quivers for arrows.

The individual craft which is most a product of modern conditions is machine-tailoring. It introduces certain new features into the productive system of Nupe which are of special interest to the student of culture contact. Machine-tailoring does not demand long training or special skill—young men learn to use a sewing-machine in a week. The machine-tailor can reckon with a very constant demand for his services. The number of machine-tailors in Nupe has, in fact, greatly increased even during the periods which I spent in the country. In 1936, for example, I found six sewing-machines in Kutigi market, against three in 1934. Machine-tailors, like ordinary tailors, will regularly visit village markets (walking perhaps ten miles or more, carrying the sewing-machines on their heads), and appear in villages a fortnight or month before an annual festival, when their services will be greatly in demand.

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294 They make as much as 1*s.* or 2*s.* on a market day; and shortly before the Great *Sallah*, for a week or ten days, they can reckon upon daily earnings up to 4*s.* Most machine-tailors do not buy their own material, but prefer to make up material brought by the customer, whom they charge a 'wage' (*lada*) of 2*d.* to 4*d.* a cloth. It is not surprising that the men who have taken up this most modern industry are mostly young men. They come partly from tailor families, but partly also—like many other 'free' craftsmen—from other professions and other social classes. The contribution of the 'gentry' is, again, considerable. Two of the five machine-[565] tailors from Bida who are now working on the village market of Jebba Island are descendants of titled families.

435 You can buy a sewing-machine in Bida (second-hand or new) for £2 to £3. Some young men have themselves bought their own sewing-294 machines with money made in wage-labour. More often the sewing-593 machine is bought by the father of the young man (or occasionally his mother), who by this purchase sets up his son in an independent trade—as blacksmiths or weavers equip their sons with tools and looms to start them on their independent work. Unlike these craftsmen, however, the father of the machine-tailor may provide the machine before his son is married, and expect him then to find himself the money for his bride-price. The son who is yet unmarried may hand over a half or a third of his earnings to his father—but this is not a rigid rule. Married sons work invariably on their own; an occasional gift of five kola-nuts (never [431] more) to the father is an act of filial piety rather than a recognition of 'business relations'.

294 The introduction of sewing-machines gives a new meaning to the question of maintenance of labour. Sewing-machines represent by far the most expensive means of production used in native crafts. They must occasionally be repaired, spare parts have to be bought, and eventually the whole machine will have to be replaced. The cost of maintaining these means of production seems more than balanced by the regular profits derived from the use of the sewing-machines. The question of obsolescence and replacement has not yet become acute. But already the problem of maintenance of labour in this new sense is felt. Blacksmiths and glass-workers, as we have seen, invest only a little money in their means of production—their main capital is labour. Weavers have to purchase looms and thus to invest a certain capital in tools; but specialized skill and training under experienced masters represent as much a 'working capital' as does loom or money. In machine-tailoring the money capital (the purchase money for the sewing-machine) represents the only investment of the craftsman; training and special skill are negligible factors. The money returns are, in fact, disproportionately high, measured by the traditional standards of skill or length of training. Here means of production and profit-bearing capital become one and the same thing. The machine must itself produce the profits out of which it will have to be replaced some day; and, through the medium of the machine, capital must reproduce itself, almost automatically. We discover, in a typical native home industry, the first traces of the modern industrial system.

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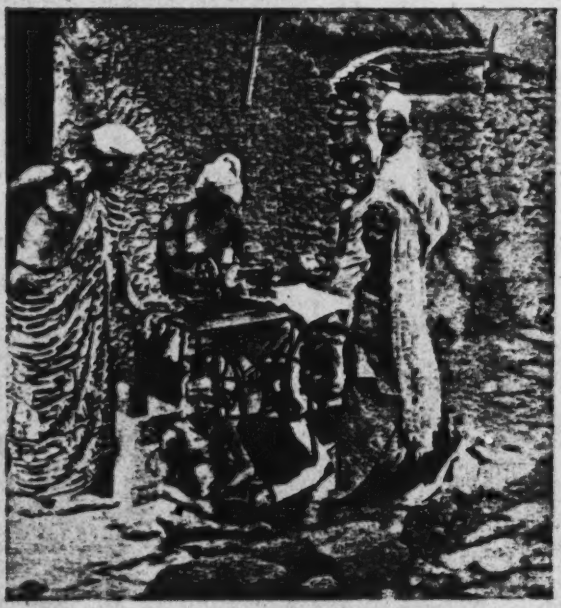
MAT-WEAVERS ON THEIR WAY HOME FROM THE FARM



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A MACHINE TAILOR

[facing p. 290]

by women mostly among the Bida upper classes.[25] Their work is not organized in a guild.

Beadworkers are known as *lantana* and their craft, a luxury industry, consists of the " refining " of crude beads bought from Hausa and Arab traders; it is carried out in the entrance-hut of the compound and is entirely individual. The majority of the workers are paid at piece-rates, one of them acting as contractor, and the chain of finished beads is traded by his wife. This industry is being extinguished by imports of European beads.[26]

Glass-makers (*masaga*) claim to have originated in Egypt. Members of the guild are Moslems. The head (*tura*) is elected by popular vote. They have the most strongly organized and conspicuously self-contained of the Nupe craft guilds and there is a regular system of apprenticeship. This craft is mainly concentrated in Bida town. Black glass (*bikini*) is made, but this is being largely replaced by coloured glass (*kwalaba*) obtained by melting down bottles which have been bought by women traders. The native glass is made in one workshop, while fabrication is completed in others. Glass-workers have their market in their own quarter. Their main products are brightly coloured beads and bangles. Unlike other craftsmen, glass-workers undertake no agricultural work. There is no *bucá* work, all work being *efakó* with small wages.[27]

Tailoring and embroidery are individual crafts and members of the same household may belong to different professions. Tailors, including machine tailors, sometimes visit surrounding villages on their market days to find work. Their main products are caps, plain and embroidered gowns, trousers, and saddle-cloths. Their embroidered gowns are famous all over Nigeria.

Straw-hat makers use a " shape " of clay or wood and the crown of the hat is sometimes partly covered with leather. This is considered a " lazy " occupation, but a few craftsmen who have been taught European designs are well-to-do.

Mat-makers of certain villages, e.g., Kutigi, are famous, and make oval or square, multi-coloured grass mats. The Basa-Nge of Igala Division make baskets and mats.

Leather-workers formerly supplied a large part of the military equipment of the Nupe army—saddlery, leather shields, sword sheaths, quivers for arrows, etc. They work mainly in Bida town.[28]

Barber-doctors cut hair for men, women, and children; shave the head and cut the tribal marks of new-born babies at the naming ceremony and cut toe and finger nails. Individuals specialize in tattooing, medicines for diseases, contraceptives, cures for barrenness, treatment of lunacy, inhalants (*turare*), and minor operations such as circumcision and blood-letting. Hausa barbers remove the uvula of children.

Bida barbers, who are busy and prosperous, do not farm and their sons always become barbers, but this is not a " closed " craft. The length of apprenticeship varies. The most highly paid jobs are regarded by the family group as *efakó*, other jobs as *bucá*. There is a three-fold guild organization in Bida, corresponding to the territories of the three royal houses. Contributions from all *efakó* income are paid to the guild-head, who administers the guild fund, deducting money for common expenses and paying the rest in full to each member of the guild in turn.

There are also " *medicine-men*," whose craft is based on magical ideas and closely connected with divining and the Nupe religious system.[29]

Drummers and dancers, organized in mainly hereditary guilds, but with a system of apprenticeship, are found in all villages. Drumming may be recreational, for ceremony and ritual or ancillary to agricultural production (e.g., farming *egbe*). In

[25] Ibid., pp. 278–82.
[26] Ibid., pp. 282–5.
[27] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 274–8; 1940b, pp. 85–6; Robertson, 1935.
[28] Nadel, 1942, pp. 286–90; Line, 1947; Hopkins, 1934.
[29] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 298–301, and see below, pp. 46–7.